

**From:** Nyle Howsmon [mailto:bvd2@lincintel.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 09, 2011 10:51 AM  
**To:** FS-comments-northern-helena  
**Subject:** Mike Horse

There are many concerns in the Lincoln community for what will eventually be a repository for holding the Mike Horse toxic waste. I would like the DEQ and Forest Service to explore more extensively keeping the waste onsite of the UBMC, keeping the waste from entering the highway on trucks. There has to be some avenue onsite that has not yet been tested. This may end up costing more funds up front but could save expenses in the long run. Involving Hwy. 200 and 279 to transport the waste heavily impacts the quality of life for surrounding neighbors on Hwy. 279. Those people are mostly retired and have a long history with their homes. Four long years of putting up with truck traffic, dust, possible contamination and threats to their environment is frightening to these people; plus the loss of property value is a given. Even if they wanted to sell their property and move to avoid the hassle of construction and health problems, the chances would be slim that anyone would want to buy in the area. The unknowns are just too great.

I don't believe that DEQ has adequately researched other avenues of the Mike Horse complex for a suitable solution. Once they discovered Site 35, little else moved forward. Their focus remained with Site 35, which has come to pass, has restrictive covenants that should be upheld. I don't understand how those restrictive covenants can be overlooked or ignored when it comes to the State of Montana creating a project of this magnitude. The very idea that this information was kept from the public does not convey a trust for transparency in a decision that impacts so many people.

The economic impact -- if Site 35 is the chosen site -- to the Lincoln community is unknown by both DEQ, the Forest Service and the people who live and do business here. Trucks will surely delay traffic and it has been said that many travelers using Hwy. 200 will choose to re-route around Lincoln to avoid delays and frustration. If that happens, the local economy, which is teetering from year to year anyway, will suffer. It won't take much economic loss to break the camels back for many businesses here. Four long years of putting up with the traffic delays is certainly a discouraging outlook for Lincoln's business community. We are a struggling community as it is. If Site 35 is chosen and we have construction and transport traffic that heavily delays the flow of traffic, I would hope that DEQ and the Forest Service consult with community leaders, the Lincoln Community Council, Lewis and Clark County Commission and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce to mitigate the impacts to the community. The people brought in to work this project should include a good share of local workers, the local motels, restaurants, RV spots and home rentals should be a part of the planning process, not merely a workers camp near the site. I would like to see outside workers investing in the Lincoln area as their home (even if temporary), enrolling children in the local school and conducting business at the local grocery, Co-op, and other businesses over their time in the area. A self-contained workers man-camp, set up close to the project, would simply thumb a nose at the Lincoln community. The major positive impact to local businesses would be seen at the bars in town when workers have time off. That has the potential to cause problems that no one wants to see happen.

This is going to be a crucial time for the Lincoln community and to keep the trust positive between the agencies and the residents, it is imperative that local input is part of the planning process.

A second choice for a waste repository would be to use the Paymaster for a portion of the soils and utilize First Gulch for the remainder. This would be lesser traffic impact to those traveling on Hwy. 200 and remove the problems associated with Site 35. The impact to Denis and Linda Bordeleau would be at least, less. I see no way to avoid the impact, destroying their quality of life, with the number of trucks coming out of the Mike Horse complex unless it is all kept onsite.

The last thing we need with the Mike Horse disposals is to stretch this out in a court of law, which is where it most likely will land if Site 35 is the chosen location. Environmentalists from outside the area will jump on this due to the restrictive covenants that were put in place years ago, along with the neighbors who occupy land adjacent to the site on Hwy. 279. It is important to move this project along as rapidly and safely as possible to best protect the Blackfoot River and the people who live in the Valley.

To comment further on the additional sites, Alice Creek 7 or Horse Fly, the agencies would need to initiate more conversation for how these sites would be accessed, what impact to neighboring landowners would be involved. The focus and conversations have mostly lied with Paymaster/First Gulch and Site 35.

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